This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/270,649 filed February 26, 2001, which is incorporated herein by reference.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-3, 6, and 9 without prejudice.

4. (Amended) Fiberoptic sensing apparatus, comprising:

a fiberoptic coupler in which a plurality of optical fibers are joined through a fused coupling region, said optical fibers including at least one input optical fiber and a plurality of output optical fibers, said fiberoptic coupler distributing light incident to said input optical fiber among said plurality of output optical fibers;

a support member;

said coupler being mounted to said support member and configured such that at least a portion of said coupling region can be deflected to change the light distribution among said output fibers with said coupling region being under substantially no tension;

a fluid column cooperative with a deflection member disposed to deflect said portion of said coupling region;

a transducer coupled to said fluid column, said transducer converting pressure fluctuations from an external source into pressure changes in said fluid column, causing said deflection member to deflect said portion of said coupling regions, said transducer being disposed at a first end of said fluid column, and said deflection member being disposed at a second end of said fluid column; and

a pressurizing device which sets an initial fluid pressure of said fluid column.

7. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said fluid column is a gaseous column.

8. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein at least part of said fluid column is contained in a hose.

10. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 4, further comprising:

a device optically coupled to said output optical fibers to detect the change of light distribution.

12. (Amended) An apparatus for monitoring acoustic activity or motion of an object, comprising:

a support member having a surface configured to support the object;

a transducer associated with said support member and capable of transmitting pressure fluctuations due to acoustic activity or motion of the supported object;

a fiberoptic sensor having a fused-fiber coupling region supported such that at least a portion of said coupling region can be deflected to change an output of said sensor with said coupling region being under substantially no tension; and

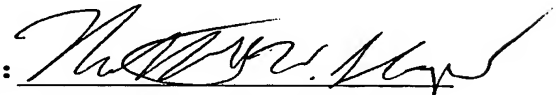
a fluid column coupled to said transducer and cooperative with a deflection member to transmit pressure fluctuations from said transducer to said deflection member, said deflection member deflecting said portion of said coupling region.

22. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 21, further comprising a display connected to an output of said device.

Additionally, to assure the pending claims a full twenty-year term from the filing of the present application, the domestic priority claim for benefit of prior application No. 09/316,143 has been withdrawn (by deletion of the cross-reference to that application). Applicants reserve the right to reinstate the domestic priority claim at their discretion.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Mitchell W. Shapiro
Reg. No. 31,568

MWS:lmb

Miles & Stockbridge P.C.
1751 Pinnacle Drive
Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102
(703) 903-9000

June 6, 2003